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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

U.S. BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS //

and

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

I U.S. BUREAU OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY //

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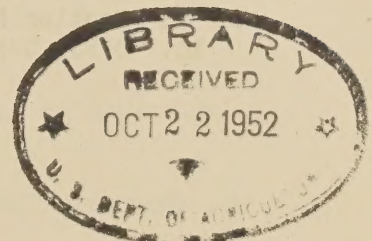
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INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS

FOR

THE 1952 SURVEY OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND PARTIAL

EMPLOYMENT OF HIRED FARM WORKERS //



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54
MAY 1952

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Introduction

The U. S. Department of Agriculture and the U. S. Department of Labor are making surveys in local areas in 4 different States to obtain information on unemployment and partial employment of seasonal hired farm workers. The results of this survey are expected to reveal the extent of employment and unemployment of seasonal farm labor and guide the Employment Service in its program of recruiting labor for seasonal farm work. The areas were selected by representatives of the individual States and present certain problems on which this survey is expected to throw some light.

You are one of several interviewers employed to interview people living in certain areas in certain towns and villages to get the information needed. These people are a carefully selected group chosen to represent all seasonal farm wage workers in the county or area. You have been provided with maps showing certain blocks or certain streets in or on which the sample households are located. You are to visit all or a specified group of houses in the sample block or specified houses along a certain route and obtain an interview at every house where a member of the household has done some farm work for wages during the past 12 months.

A. Outline of job

1. Study these Instructions to Interviewers thoroughly.
2. Start interviewing when instructed by your supervisor.
3. Go to the area in which you are to work and locate it exactly from the map given you.
4. Fill out a Household Identification Sheet for each area assigned to you.
5. If the entries on the Household Identification Sheet show that the household has one or more workers with farm wage work in the past 12 months fill out the necessary schedule or schedules.
6. If after 3 visits you are unable to find anyone at home to furnish the required information do not make any more attempts and make a note on the Household Identification Sheet in the last column.
7. Check over your completed schedules every day to make sure that they are complete and accurate.
8. Turn in completed schedules and forms to your supervisor at such times and places as directed.
9. Keep an accurate record of your time and mileage on form CEF-201 and turn it in to your supervisor as directed when you complete your assignment.
10. Return your Identification Card, maps and any other items supplied you to your supervisor at the completion of the survey.

B. Materials provided

1. U.S.D.A. Identification Card - return to supervisor at end of survey.
2. CEF-201, Time and Mileage Certificate
3. City, town or county maps
4. Household Identification Sheets
5. Head of Household schedules
6. Other Worker schedules
7. Interviewer Instructions
8. Miscellaneous supplies.

C. INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES

I. Importance of good interviewing techniques

All of our experience and all that we have learned about making interview surveys has demonstrated that in the final showdown the most important person connected with the survey is the interviewer. We can draw a good sample, design a perfect questionnaire and make a highly competent analysis but if the interviewer has not done his job well the results of the survey will not be good. This is not to minimize the importance of the other phases of an interview survey but so much depends on the skill with which the interviewer does his job that no effort has been spared to perfect the techniques and procedures, so that the results of his time and effort will be fully worthwhile.

From the interviewer's point of view, it is equally important for him to learn to do his job well because proper methods will enable him not only to do a better job but to do it much more easily. Thus we see that from any point of view every advantage is to be gained by increasing your skill as an interviewer.

II. What do we mean by good interviewing techniques?

By good interviewing techniques we mean simply this:

1. Being courteous
2. Being sincere
3. Being businesslike
4. Being accurate
5. Being alert

There isn't anything very complicated about any of those items, is there? They seem perfectly simple and clear cut and it may seem a waste of time to discuss them but remember experience has taught the value of doing these things well.

III. How does one apply good interviewing techniques?

1. Being courteous: You will be courteous, and smart, if you put the respondent at ease as soon as possible. You can do this by appearing friendly when somebody comes to the door and telling him frankly and easily who you are and who you are with and why you are there. Remember that most people are a little afraid of strangers, not because they have done anything wrong but because they are a little timid. Franklin D. Roosevelt once said that everybody is a little shy when he first meets a person, himself included. So in order to relieve his own apprehension, he always spent the first minute with a person trying to make him feel at ease and comfortable.

You will be courteous in never arguing or being belligerent or taking offense or staying longer at a house than the situation actually requires.

You can be courteous by simply remembering the respondent's name and, of course, never, in any way, shape or form, indicate any amusement at a person's name. People are sensitive, very sensitive about their names and some names do have a possible amusing side, but you will accept the name in a matter of fact way.

2. Being sincere: There is no substitute for sincerity in a person. We have all known people who entertained ideas that to us seemed silly or ridiculous. But if that person was sincere in his idea, we always made allowance for him. We would say, "Well, he is perfectly sincere", and we liked him for it. Now, it is absolutely essential that an interviewer be sincere in what he is doing. If an interviewer is not convinced that this is a worthwhile project, then he will not do as good a job as he should. He must feel that he is justified in asking this respondent to give him this information and to take the time to give it. If an interviewer is not so convinced, then he is apt to have difficulty in getting an interview sometimes when there is a reluctance on the part of the respondent to give an interview. The manner in which you go about your work will indicate to the respondents how you feel about the project and will have a great deal to do with his attitude towards it.
3. Being businesslike: The interviewer is hired and trained to do an important job. It is serious business and the interviewer must indicate to the respondents that he does consider it serious business by the way he goes about handling the job. The best way to do this is to conduct the interview energetically and leave promptly when it is completed. This means that he does not waste time in useless gab nor in carrying gossip from house to house nor by attempting jokes that probably will make him look silly. He can and should be pleasant and engage in some conversation that isn't directly related to the survey, but this should be in the nature of being courteous and establishing a friendly atmosphere and should not be a major or considerable part of his visit. Dressing properly and knowing your business will go a long way toward conveying to the respondent that you are there on business and not on a lark.

4. Being accurate: An interview survey is a precision instrument. By that we mean that every phase of the survey must be carefully planned and faithfully executed. Nowhere is this more important than in the work of the interviewer. The interviewer must locate the exact areas of the county that are in his segments. He must use the proper schedule for each interview. He must ask the questions exactly as they are worded on the questionnaire and must enter the answers correctly in the proper place. If the answer is obviously wrong, he should check to see if "I got it right." If the respondent answers with a range, say 40 to 50 dollars, he must probe to get the one figure which the respondent thinks is most accurate. For example, he would say, "40 to 50 dollars?" "Which do you think is the closest?" If the question is not clearly understood repeat it slowly and give the respondent a chance to consider his answer.
5. Being alert: There is nothing simple or easy about the job of an interviewer. This is a complex undertaking. There are many phases where it is easy to go wrong. The interviewer must be ever on the alert for the signposts that are set up to help guide him through his job. He must check and recheck to make sure that he is in the right place, getting the right schedule and asking the proper questions.

To sum up, we want to repeat that the importance of the interviewer's work cannot be over-emphasized. When the interviewer starts down the road to make his interview the success or failure of the entire survey is in his hands. It will be better for the results of the survey and better for the interviewer if he sticks close to these 5 elements of good interviewing - being courteous, being sincere, being businesslike, being accurate, and being alert.

D. Work to be done

1. Starting field work: When you are thoroughly familiar with the instructions and forms to be used you are ready to start your field work. Study the maps given you and after locating the areas which have been assigned to you, plan your route of travel. Remember in planning your route that you will find it necessary to make call-backs. If possible, lay out your work so that you can make call-backs on your way to and from the area in which you plan to spend the major part of the day.
2. Location of sample area: You will be furnished maps which will show you where you are to work. At the time this is being written, we cannot give you detailed information on how your maps will be prepared. You may be assigned city blocks in which you are to contact every house, or perhaps every 3rd or 4th house. You may also be assigned certain streets on which for instance, you will contact every 3rd or 4th house. Your assignment may also include combinations of these methods. More precise instructions will be given you at the training school. However, no matter what method is used, it is extremely important that you work in the area assigned you and in no other and that you cover the area assigned completely. We do not want interviewers to get into areas assigned to another interviewer. It is also extremely important in

cases you are instructed to take every 3rd or 4th house that you follow the instructions given you in selecting such houses exactly. One of the interviewer's main responsibilities is to see that he contact all those houses assigned to him and only those assigned.

3. Filling out Household Identification Sheet: After you have gone to and located exactly the area in which you are to work, you should start at one corner of a block and proceed around it in a clockwise direction (provided you are assigned a block) until you reach the point where you started. Be sure to check every court, alley or passageway in the block. If the area assigned to you is not a block cover your area street by street or road by road. In some cases, it may be desirable to interrupt the canvas of a principal street in order to cover short side streets. You may use your own judgment but be sure that no part of your area is missed. In order to help you check your progress and to insure covering your entire area draw a line parallel to the street to indicate that you have covered that street. You will need a line along each side of the street.

When you reach the first house in a sample area enter it as 1 in the first column of your H-I Sheet for that sample area. Go to the house and introduce yourself (suggested introduction on page 6) and start filling out the H-I Sheet for this household. Be sure to find out if there is more than one household in the house. (Definition of household on page 10). If there is more than one household you will need to use one line of the H.I. Sheet for each household. If you get a "Yes" answer to the first question on the sheet conclude the interview and proceed to the next house. If the answer is "No" ask the next question. If the response is "No" there were no persons in the household who did farm wage work to the question in column 3, conclude the interview. In case there were farm wage workers, find out how many and enter the number in the next column. Then proceed to fill out a Head of Household schedule and as many Other Worker schedules as there are farm wage workers in the household, other than the head of the household. The remainder of H.I. Sheet entitled "Record of Interview" gives you a summary of your work. Check the first column of this section if you obtained a Head of Household Schedule and enter the number of "Other Worker" Schedules in the next column. If you were refused an interview place a check in the column headed "Refusal." In the last column enter the number and street for this house if no one was at home. This will give you a record of the houses to which you must return later to complete the H.I. Sheet and get an interview if one is required. After you have completed the H.I. Sheet for Household Number 1 by getting a "Yes" reply for column 2, a "No" for column 3, or completed the necessary schedules; or found no one at home and entered the street and number in the last column, proceed to the next house in the sample. Enter 2 in column 1 for this house and proceed as for the first house. Continue your canvass of your sample area entering household numbers consecutively as you come to them until you finish the sample area. If there are more households in the sample area than lines on the H.I. Sheet, use another sheet showing the same sample area number and place page 2 under the sample area number. Continue numbering households consecutively using as many sheets as necessary to complete the sample area. Start a new Household Identification Sheet for each sample area.

4. Definition of farm work: Farm work is any work done on a farm in connection with the production, harvesting, preparation for market or delivery to market of agricultural products. Work done on a farm in construction, repair, maintenance or improvement of farm buildings, fences and machinery is to be considered farm work if done by unskilled workers not hired specifically for such work. It includes preparation for market of products produced mainly on the farm, as for example, the packing of fruits or vegetables in a farmer's packing shed when more than half of the produce packed was raised on the farmer's own farm. On the other hand, work done by a skilled carpenter or mason hired to construct a farm building is not considered farm work nor is the work of a skilled craftsman or professional person not ordinarily thought of as a farm worker.

E. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Introducing yourself: One of the problems of an interviewer is his introduction to the prospective respondent. After you once get started and get some practice at interviewing you will be able to fit your introduction to the situation. You will need first of all to address your opening remarks to an adult in the household. You should start out something like this:

"Good morning. My name is M. Blank and I am working for the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Labor. As you know, there is a lot of talk about the difficulty of finding people to work on farms these days. I have been sent out to find people who work on farms and ask them some questions about their work. Would you have time to help us by answering some questions?"

In most cases, a simple statement such as this should serve to introduce yourself and get you started. It may be necessary at times to assure the respondent that none of the information given you will be used against him in any way, such as for income tax purpose or by any law enforcement agency. In our experience in the past, we have found that people are generally very willing to talk about themselves and their families if they are assured that the information they give will serve some useful purpose.

2. The proper respondent: Interviewers always run into the problem of whom to interview. As a general rule, the head of the household should give the answers for the "Head of Household" schedule. The individual workers, who did farm wage work, should answer the questions on the "Other Worker" schedule. This may not always be possible even by making evening calls or call-backs. The housewife may be able to supply part of the information, especially that for the household. If the person or persons who did farm wage work are not available at the time the interviewer makes his first call, it will probably be best to obtain all the information the housewife can give with reasonable accuracy and make an appointment to come back to complete the interview.

3. Not-at-homes: We will undoubtedly run into situations where no one is at home when the interviewer calls. In cases of this type, enter the Household Number of the house on the H.I. Sheet and the street and house number in the last column of the H.I. sheet. It will probably be worthwhile to check with neighbors on when you can find such people at home. Make 3 attempts to find people at home and if unsuccessful on the 3rd attempt check with neighbors to see if they know whether the family did farm wage work last year. If you can get a definite answer that appears accurate fill in columns 2, 3, and 4 of the face sheet. In the columns for "Record of Interview" write in "from neighbors, not at home" and make no further attempts to get information.
4. Schedule entries: Careful, intelligent entries and legible writing are essential. A fairly soft pencil should be used so that the entries will be clear. Do not make entries in ink.

Every item on the schedule requires an entry except those you are instructed to skip (as printed in the schedule). You will find a number of "Yes" or "No" questions in the schedule. Be sure to check "Yes" or "No" and follow instructions to skip when they are present. Where a zero is the appropriate entry, enter "0". Do not use check marks, dashes, or other indeterminate symbols. If you failed to obtain information called for, enter one of the following symbols to explain the omission:

DK - don't know (where the respondent doesn't know
and will not make an estimate)

R - refused to answer

Make notes explaining any unusual circumstances or wherever further comments will be useful. These notes may be put in any blank space on the page or on the facing page.

Remember that the analyst has only what you turn in to work with. Whenever any inconsistency in two or more entries appears or when inaccuracies are disclosed in the interview an explanatory note is to be written on the bottom or margin of the page. Such notes are extremely helpful in analyzing the results. After completing the enumeration of this farm, check over the schedule and complete any entry from notes you may have put down before going to the next farmer.

5. Review of the schedules: After completing an interview, check through the schedule before going to the next house to see that all questions are answered and that information taken as notes is properly entered. Before turning in the schedules, you should review them to see that all entries have been properly filled in. In addition, schedules should be reviewed for general consistency between various sections. The number of workers doing farm wage work should be consistent with the number of schedules. For example, there should be an "Other Worker" schedule for each person reporting "Yes" to

question A-9. The time periods reported in Section C should be consistent with those in Sections D and E. In short, when the schedule is reviewed, it should show an accurate and reasonable picture of each household.

F. CONTENT AND PURPOSE OF THE SCHEDULE

1. Objective of study: The objective of the study is to determine, for the particular areas surveyed, the usual employment patterns of the workers with a view toward development of programs by the Farm Placement Service for full utilization of domestic agricultural labor resources. Specifically, the objective is to determine the periods of seasonal unemployment, availability for farm or nonfarm work during these periods, extent and causes of unemployment and partial employment, willingness of laborers to accept employment in other areas and other types of employment, income of workers seasonally employed in agriculture, number of employers for whom they have worked, and related data.
2. Use to be made of the information: The information will be used in two ways: Directly for current operating programs, and indirectly for development of programs for future application.

The information will be used directly by the Farm Placement Service to develop programs for utilizing farm workers during their periods of seasonal unemployment for work in other areas of labor needs during 1952. An illustration of such programming is the recent and successful arrangement between the State Employment Service of Mississippi and that of Florida for the employment of Mississippi workers in seasonal Florida activity with a definite commitment for workers to return in time for seasonal work in the base area. Farmers are concerned about committing funds and time in planting and cultivating crops without assurance that labor will be available for harvesting. Programs of this type are beneficial to farm employers in assuring them a reliable labor supply. These programs are also beneficial to the farm worker since they may result in providing continuous employment for greater periods of time, increasing his income, and improving his status generally. Finally, these programs may tend to reduce the need for recruiting foreign labor to work in seasonal crop activity at a time when American workers may be idle elsewhere.

From a long-range standpoint, the data concerning length of time workers are employed by a single employer earnings of farm workers and incentives necessary for out-of-area employment may be helpful to the Bureau of Employment Security in developing plans for making farm work more attractive. For example, they may contribute to our knowledge of the feasibility of extending Unemployment Insurance coverage to farm workers and Old-Age and Survivors Insurance coverage to seasonal agricultural workers.

Another use of the data is to determine, for the areas studied, trends in patterns of labor supply particularly with reference to the attraction of agricultural workers into non-agricultural employment.